

Formulating a Restoration Plan for the Puget Sound Nearshore

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The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Program (PSNERP) is developing a restoration plan for the nearshore ecosystem of Puget Sound. This paper will describe how PSNERP is using historic and current conditions assessments to complete a change analysis of the nearshore, then applying understanding of how human activities have changed nearshore ecosystem processes along with our hypotheses about appropriate restoration response so we may predict or forecast alternative futures after restoration. Our restoration plan is organized by a series of guiding restoration principles that describe our understanding of the nearshore and what range of actions are recommended to guide our approach to process-based restoration. Fundamental to this approach is to focus restoration of on nearshore processes that form and maintain ecosystem structure, which in turn provide valued functions such as habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants. We are also applying a restoration concept that uses “portfolios” of actions that will guide restoration from small spatial scales of action (small coastal streams) to large “reaches” of the Puget Sound nearshore. Together, the assessments, principles, and forecasts will be used to develop a spatially explicit, process-based, Sound-wide restoration plan to strategically restore nearshore processes.